

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously presented) A method of collecting ratings on a plurality of subjects, said method comprising the steps of:

storing, on a portable computing device, a first set of ratings for ones of a plurality of subjects and a first set of indications of interest regarding additional ones of said plurality of subjects;

storing on the portable computing device, a policy specifying whether rating information is to be accepted through a short-range transmission device;

encountering, through the short-range transmission device, a user having a second set of ratings for ones of said plurality of subjects;

responsive to said policy being met, receiving, through said short-range transmission device, ones of said second set of ratings;

updating ones of said first set of ratings and ones of said first set of indications of interest by merging with corresponding ones of said second set of ratings, wherein the updating is further configured for updating ones of said first set of ratings by calculating, for each of said ones of said first set of ratings updated, a new weighted rating based on an existing weighted rating from said first set of ratings, an existing weighted rating from said second set of ratings, and a similarity factor between said first set of ratings and said second set of ratings; and

displaying said updated ones of said first set of ratings.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Original) The method of Claim 10, wherein said merging step is performed dependent on said second set of ratings having a similarity of at least a given level to said first set of ratings.

13. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 10, further comprising the steps of broadcasting a request for ratings and responding to a broadcast of a request for ratings.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Original) The method of Claim 10, wherein said merging step comprises receiving a plurality of individual responses for each of ones of said plurality of subjects and storing said plurality of individual responses in a semantic tree network for said subject.

16. (Original) The method of Claim 15, wherein a rating for one of said plurality of subjects is calculated by summing all collected responses in a semantic tree network for said one of said plurality of subjects.

17. (Original) The method of Claim 10, wherein said merging step comprises calculating a rating by summing a first rating of said first set of ratings and a corresponding second rating of said second set of ratings, using a weighting factor.

18-28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 10, wherein said policy comprises at least one of a policy to not accept input from a user that has provided input within a last period of time and a policy to receive input only during certain hours.

30. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 10, wherein said policy is entered by a user.

31-32. (Canceled)